

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-01

TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04

SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 FTC-01

JUSE-00 SAM-01 /097 W

----- 002073

R 220432Z DEC 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2632

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1282

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, EGEN, IZ

SUBJ: CONTACTS BETWEEN US REPS AND BOYCOTT OFFICIALS

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REF: KUWAIT 5209

1. USINT BAGHDAD STRINGLY SUPPORTS EMBASSY KUWAIT'S PROPOSAL (REFTAL) THAT USG MODIFY ITS POLICY OF PROHIBITING ALL CONTACT BETWEEN FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL AND LOCAL ARAB BOYCOTT OFFICIALS. AFTER THE RECENT WELL-PUBLISHED STEPS TAKEN BY USG IN REGARD TO BOYCOTTS, USG'S OFFICIAL OPPOSITION MUST BE CRYSTAL CLEAR TO ALL INTERESTED OBSERVERS AND IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT ANYONE COULD NOW MISINTERPRET SUCH CONTACTS AS AN OFFICIAL USG SANCTION FOR BOYCOTT PRACTICES.

2. IN OUR JUDGEMENT, PAST LACK OF CONTACT WITH BOYCOTT OFFICIALS HAS BEEN COUNTERPROCUTIVE. IT HAS PREVENTED USG FROM HELPING US BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO UNDERSTAND NATURE AND SCOPE OF BOYCOTT PROVISIONS AND THUS INTRODUCED UNNECESSARY ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY IN BUSINESS CALCULATIONS. THIS UNCERTAINTY HAS NO DOUBT DISCOURAGED SOME PROSPECTIVE BUSINESSMEN AND THERBY MADE THE BOYCOTT EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE THAN IT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN.

3. IN ALL PROBABLITY, WE HAVE ALSO MISSED OPPORTUNITIES TO PERSUADE ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO MODIRY THEIR BOYCOTT PRACTICES. APPLICATION OF BOYCOTT REGULATIONS IS NOT UNIFORM THROUGHOUT THE ARAB WORLD. EVERY ARAB GOVERNMENT DECIDES FOR ITSELF IN LIGHT OF ITS OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS HOW FAR TO GO IN FOLLOWING POLICIES RECOMMENDED BY ARAB BOYCOTT OFFICE AND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE VARIATION IN PRACTICE FROM ONE ARAB STATE TO ANOTHER. THESE DIFFERENCES WOULD PROVIDE SCOPE FOR DISCUSSION WITH LOCAL BOYCOTT OFFICIALS.

4. IN SOME ARAB COUNTRIES OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF BOYCOTT OFFICES ARE PERSONALLY FRIENDLY TO AMERICANS AND PRO-WESTERN IN THEIR OUTLOOK. IN ALL CASES, THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT BOYCOTT NOT BE APPLIED IN WAYS THAT HARM INTERESTS OF THEIR OWN COUNTRIES. MANY OF THESE OFFICIALS WOULD PROBABLY PERCEIVE A MUTUAL INTEREST TO BE SERVED IN DISCUSSING APPLICATIONS OF BOYCOTT WITH AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES.

5. IN SOME CASES, OF COURSE, CONTACT BETWEEN US DIPLOMATIC OFFICIALS AND LOCAL BOYCOTT REPS MIGHT BE TACHICALLY UNWISE. JUDGEMENT AND DISCRETION ON PART OF FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE NEEDED IN DISCUSSING BOYCOTT ISSUES,
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AS IT IS IN DISUCSSING A NUMBER OF OTHER SENSITIVE ISSUES WITH WHICH USG DIPLOMATIC REPS NORMALLY DEAL. WE BELIVE THAT MUCH COULD BE GAINED AND LITTLE LOST BY GIVING OUR FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL THE OPTION OF DISCUSSING BOYCOTT MATTERS DIRECTLY WITH THE RESPONSIBLY HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BOYCOTTS, GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL, FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BAGHDA01282
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750445-0092
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751220/aaaaarly.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 KUWAIT 5209
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUL 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <24 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONTACTS BETWEEN US REPS AND BOYCOTT OFFICIALS CONFIDENTIAL
TAGS: ETRD, EGEN, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006